

Latrobe Valley Regional REHABILITATION STRATEGY

At a Glance

The Latrobe Valley Regional Rehabilitation Strategy (LVRRS) provides a blueprint to progress rehabilitation planning for the Latrobe Valley's three brown coal mines.

The LVRRS provides guidance to mine licensees, government, community and stakeholders on regional issues that need to be considered in planning for and undertaking rehabilitation of the mines.

The Strategy recognises that mine rehabilitation is complex and involves different risks and opportunities. Regardless of the agreed ultimate solution, the final rehabilitated landforms will take decades to deliver.

The Strategy builds on what we have learnt over the last four years and sets out a collaborative pathway for community and stakeholders to further explore key issues with a clear view to ensuring the best possible outcomes for the region. It sets out actions to further address issues around mine safety and stability, and for the Government to further explore alternate water supply options, such as recycled water or desalinated water, if a water-based mine rehabilitation approach remains the preferred approach for mine licensees. Mine licensees are also encouraged to work with key stakeholders to identify alternative/contingency rehabilitation options to manage land stability and fire risks if sufficient water is not available.

The Strategy works within the legal and regulatory framework of the *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990* and accompanying regulations that apply to all major mining operations in Victoria. As such, it does not set out a rehabilitation plan for each mine, as this will be subject to further technical investigations and form part of each mine licensees' Declared Mine Rehabilitation Plan to be submitted to the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR).

The Latrobe Valley Regional Rehabilitation Strategy (LVRRS) has been developed in consultation with industry, stakeholders, the community, the Latrobe Valley Mine Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, and the Latrobe Valley Mine Rehabilitation Commissioner.

BACKGROUND

The Latrobe Valley's brown coal mines are inherently unstable and fire-prone and require a wide range of active controls to prevent harm to human life, the environment and critical infrastructure. There have been a number of major failures at these sites over their history, including major land slippages and fires, which have had significant social, environmental and economic impacts.

Studies completed as part of the preparation of the LVRRS indicate that with a projected drying climate, relying on water from the Latrobe system to fill the mines to achieve safe and stable post-mine landforms presents significant risks. Therefore, mine rehabilitation must plan for a drying climate and we will need to consider alternative options that do not rely on water from the Latrobe River system.

With Hazelwood ceasing operations in 2017 and Yallourn and Loy Yang currently scheduled for closure in 2032 and 2048 respectively, careful consideration and planning for mine rehabilitation needs to be undertaken now to ensure a positive, post-mining legacy for the Latrobe Valley.

VISION, OUTCOMES AND PRINCIPLES

This vision will be delivered by achieving six outcomes for the rehabilitation of coal mine land and the monitoring and evaluation of that land after rehabilitation is complete.

To support the realisation of this vision and outcomes, the LVRRS sets out principles to guide planning for the rehabilitation of Latrobe Valley coal mines and adjacent land within a regional context.

VISION

The Latrobe Valley coal mines and adjacent land are transformed to safe, stable and sustainable landforms which support the next land use

REGIONAL MINE REHABILITATION OUTCOMES

People, land, environment and infrastructure are protected	Land is returned to a safe, stable and sustainable landform	Aboriginal values are protected	Community are engaged, and their aspirations inform the transformation	Long term benefits and future opportunities to the community are optimised	An integrated approach to rehabilitation and regional resource management is adopted
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IMPLEMENTATION PRINCIPLES

Fire risk of rehabilitated land should be no greater than that of the surrounding environment	Traditional Owner involvement in rehabilitation planning should be developed in consultation with Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation	Requirements for ongoing management to sustain a safe and stable landform should be minimised as far as practicable	Community should be consulted on rehabilitation proposals, the potential impacts, and have the opportunity to express their views
Mine rehabilitation should plan for a drying climate. Rehabilitation activities and final landforms should be climate resilient	Mine rehabilitation and regional land use planning should be integrated and the rehabilitated sites should be suitable for their intended uses	Any water used for mine rehabilitation should not negatively impact on Traditional Owners' values, environmental values of the Latrobe River system or the rights of other existing water users	Ground instability and ground movement risks and impacts during rehabilitation and in the long-term should be minimised as far as practicable

A TIMELINE FOR ACTION

Implementation of the Strategy will provide mine licensees with further clarity on the options available for mine rehabilitation, by progressing the following initiatives and reforms that will inform their rehabilitation plans.

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

IMPLEMENTATION ACTION (lead agency)	DETAIL ON ACTION REQUIRED	COMPLETION DATE
Provide guidance on the use of climate change scenarios for water resource planning for mine rehabilitation (DELWP)	DELWP to provide guidance on climate change scenarios to be used by mine licensees when planning for projected water resource availability. Updated guidance for the Latrobe Valley context will be provided upon the release of the next iteration of the <i>Guidelines for Assessing the Impact of Climate Change on Water Supplies in Victoria</i> . This analysis is to inform licensees' preparation of their Declared Mine Rehabilitation Plan.	Q4 2020
Develop new Declared Mine regulations (DJPR)	DJPR to develop new Declared Mine regulations to achieve oversight, stakeholder engagement, knowledge management and regulation of the Latrobe Valley coal mine land.	Q1 2021
Guidance on potential water sources and access arrangements for mine licensees to undertake rehabilitation (DELWP)	DELWP to provide high-level guidance on how water from the Latrobe River system may be allocated and accessed for the purposes of Latrobe Valley mine rehabilitation including indicative conditions that may be placed on any water entitlements that protect the rights of existing users, like farmers, towns and businesses, the environment and values of Traditional Owners. This advice is to inform licensees' preparation of their Declared Mine Rehabilitation Plan.	Q2 2021
Further assess the feasibility of alternative water sources that could be used for mine rehabilitation (DELWP with DJPR support)	Mine operators encouraged to collaborate with Government and stakeholders to further assess the feasibility of alternative water sources (such as recycled or desalinated water) for mine rehabilitation. This analysis should inform licensees' preparation of their Declared Mine Rehabilitation Plan.	Q2 2021
Identify alternative/contingency rehabilitation options to manage land stability and fire risks if sufficient water is not available (DJPR)	Mine operators encouraged to collaborate with Government and stakeholders to identify alternate/contingency rehabilitation options to manage land stability and fire risks in case sufficient water is not available.	Q2 2021
Support Integrated Mines Research Group (DJPR)	DJPR to support the Integrated Mines Research Group in identification of investigations to bridge rehabilitation knowledge gaps, with oversight from the Mine Land Rehabilitation Authority	Q4 2026

These implementation actions will be monitored by the Mine Land Rehabilitation Authority (MLRA) who will report on progress annually to the Minister for Resources.

The Minister for Resources must review the strategy at least once every three years after it is published and may amend the strategy at any time after consulting with the MLRA.

CONTACT US

For further information, you can find a copy of the Latrobe Valley Regional Rehabilitation Strategy and related factsheets online at earthresources.vic.gov.au/lvrrs or by contacting the LVRRS Project Team via email at lvrrs@ecodev.vic.gov.au or on (03) 5184 2000.

